

But Marquis is more than the arbiter of dainty elegances in rhyme: he sings and celebrates a robust world where men struggle upward from the slime and discontent leaps from star to star. The evolutionary theme is a favourite with him: the grand pageant of humanity groping from Piltown to Beacon Hill, winning in a million years two precarious inches of forehead. Much more often than F. P. A., who used to be his brother colyumist in Manhattan, he dares to disclose the real earnestness that underlies his chaff.

I suppose that the conductor of a daily humorous column stands in the hierarchy of unthanked labourers somewhere between a plumber and a submarine trawler. Most of the available wheezes were pulled long ago by Plato in the *Republic* (not the *New Republic*) or by Samuel Butler in his Notebooks. Contribs come valiantly to hand with a barrowful of letters every day—"The ravings fed him" as Don captioned some contrib's quip about Simeon Stylites living on a column); but nevertheless the direct and alternating current must be turned on six times a week. His jocular exposal of the colyumist's trade secret compares it to the boarding-house keeper's rotation of crops:

MONDAY. Take up an idea in a serious way. (ROAST BEEF.)

TUESDAY. Some one writes us a letter about Monday's serious idea. (COLD ROAST BEEF.)